

Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft
&
European Shakespeare Research Association
2011

The 2011 spring conference of the German Shakespeare Society, organised in association
with the European Shakespeare Research Association (ESRA), will take place
28 April – 1 May 2011 in Weimar (Germany)

Shakespeare's Shipwrecks: Theatres of Maritime Adventure

Shakespearean theatre and drama show a world of maritime experience. Born from an early modern culture of wide-ranging sea adventures, vibrant with the great excitements of contemporary voyaging, reaching out into the worlds of Mediterranean and transatlantic seafaring, Shakespeare's works engage with oceanic spaces as a natural sphere of promise, peril, and temptation. As land-bound creatures, humans generally venture out across the sea in clear defiance of their given place. This is why, according to Lucretius and other ancient thinkers, voyaging is a form of transgression, a primary act of cultural invention which seeks to go beyond the limits imposed on us by Providence so as to venture towards self-determination. Shipwreck is part of this wager, a necessary figure of the risks incurred through all such efforts to shape and forge the future. Between a providential view of catastrophe and the devastations of unaccountable contingencies, Shakespeare's work pursues a course that steers his characters across spaces of elementary risk which they may never escape.

'European Shakespeare' promotes an approach to this phenomenon which complements the critical perspective from the Stratford side of the Channel with a Continental one. It thus has the sea inscribed in its very definition: as the most obvious and the most basic boundary between Britain and abroad, the sea inevitably crops up when it comes to distinguishing things British from other things, from things elsewhere. In such binary distinctions, the sea tends to be no more than a blank space, the *nonentity* between two geographical entities. But this radically understates its significance in the cultural and political imagination. According to the song, it is, after all, specifically *the waves* Britannia is supposed to rule. And it was the waves that fought England's most important battle in Shakespeare's lifetime: the battle against the Spanish Armada, which secured the geopolitical insularity that was to define the British position vis-à-vis continental Europe for centuries to come. Having explored the cultural landscapes of Europe at previous conferences of the European Shakespeare Research Association, we now turn to the Continent's rich and varied seascapes. Shakespeare's works do not regard the sea as an amorphous collective singular, but as a plural of very different maritime spaces and topoi – from the old *mare nostrum*, the Mediterranean, to the Channel and the Irish Sea, to the Western ocean beyond the Pillars of

Hercules. The sea is quite obviously a prime medium and a major challenge for the go-betweeners who brought about cultural exchange in Renaissance Europe. But the maritime focus is also pertinent when it comes to the later sea-changes that Shakespeare has undergone and is undergoing through various modes of appropriation, translation, and stage production.

Confirmed Speakers

Opening Keynote

Ania Loomba, University of Pennsylvania

Plenary Speakers:

Tobias Döring, University of Munich

Ina Habermann, University of Basel

Ton Hoenselaars, Utrecht University

Rui Carvalho Homem, University of Porto

Gordon McMullan, King's College London

Carol Rutter, Warwick University

Katrin Trüstedt, University of Erfurt

Closing Keynote

Peter Greenaway

Call for Seminar Papers

Proposals for papers to be presented in seminars are welcome. Proposals should contain a 200-300 word abstract together with the full name, affiliation and email of their author(s) and they should be emailed to the convenors of each seminar.

Deadline for reception of abstracts: 10 January 2011

Seminars

1. *Shakespeare's (Un)fortunate Travellers: Maritime Adventures across the Genres*
Christina Wald (University of Augsburg, Germany) and Felix Sprang (University of Hamburg, Germany)

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From *The Comedy of Errors* to *The Tempest* Shakespearean drama is imbued with maritime adventure, drawing on the larger cultural appeal which oceanic spaces clearly held for early modern travellers. Maritime adventures both connect the homely land-locked places and potentially disrupt all man-made lines of cultural connection. Shipwreck is part of this wager, a necessary figure of the risks incurred through human efforts to shape and forge the future,

frequently enacted on the stage. Plays such as *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Pericles* and, of course, *The Tempest* explicitly point to the dangers involved in seafaring, but the spectacle of risk also surfaces in the rhetoric of many other plays and, indeed, in many narratives and poems whenever navigation provides a repertoire of tropes. Our seminar invites contributions which look at maritime adventures in Shakespeare's works, in Shakespeare's sources as well as in adaptations of his plays, across different genres and media.

Plots based on maritime adventure are by no means just confined to drama, but are frequently involved in tales and travelogues. Some of the most appealing scenes in prose narratives, such as the romances by Sidney and Greene, in fact are scenarios of shipwreck and have, among others, inspired Shakespeare when writing his plays. Biblical accounts like St Paul's shipwreck in the Acts or the tale of Jonah, too, serve as a further source of inspiration and of figurative meaning, manifest in poems such as Donne's *Hymn to Christ, at the Author's Last Going Into Germany* or in emblems such as Alciato's *Spes proxima*. Evidently, a broad spectrum of cultural media and literary genres can be studied to discuss the issues here at stake.

We will address the question how maritime adventures travelled from the page to the stage and back to the page. We particularly invite contributions which consider how issues of seafaring and spectacles of shipwreck figure differently in different media and genres. What may be the problems or the merits when *showing* as opposed to *telling* maritime adventures and catastrophes? What narrative devices, what rhetorical figures and what performative strategies are in each case used to represent the vast illimitable spaces and the terrors of the sea which, strictly speaking, always exceed representation? In what ways and with which terms is this problem of representation addressed in stories, plays or poems, in specific performances or screenings?

2. The Aesthetics and Politics of Shakespeare (Re)Translation

Tom Cheesman (Swansea University, Wales) and Matthias Zach (University of Nantes, France)

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'Translations are always embedded in cultural and political systems, and in history. For too long translation was seen as purely an aesthetic act, and ideological problems were disregarded.' (Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi, 'Introduction: of colonies, cannibals and vernaculars', *Post-colonial translation: theory and practice*, London: Routledge, 1999: 6). Political and ideological issues have in fact been a central concern of much work in translation studies in the past decade. The various relationships between translation as an 'aesthetic act' on the one hand and its political and ideological implications and contexts on the other remain an important issue for research and reflection.

The aesthetic force and intricacy of his work and its importance as cultural heritage make Shakespeare an ideal candidate for analyses situated at the interface of the aesthetic, political and ideological dimensions of translation and retranslation processes. Previous ESRA conferences explicitly addressed the potential for conflict and the political relevance of Shakespeare's work and its reception; several contributions specifically concerned translation. Building on this work, we propose a seminar on the relationships between aesthetics and politics in Shakespeare (re)translations.

We wish to reflect especially (but not exclusively) on retranslations, and among them on what Pym calls 'active' retranslations: those which not only reveal 'historical changes in the target culture', but also 'yield insights into the nature and workings of translation itself, into its own special range of disturbances.' (Anthony Pym, *Method in Translation History*, Manchester: St. Jerome, 1998: 82-84) Possible questions include (but are not limited to):

- How are political circumstances and/or political convictions reflected in the text of individual translations and/or successive, competing retranslations?
- What is the relationship (in national, international or transnational frameworks) between political histories and histories of Shakespeare retranslation?
- Which ideological/political conflicts have been waged through Shakespeare (re)translations?
- How are intercultural and intra-cultural politics reflected in (re)translations?
- What is the relationship between political and aesthetic strategies in (re)translations?
- How do the aesthetics and politics of intertextuality operate in retranslations?
- What can comparative approaches add to the study of Shakespeare retranslation?
- What methods are appropriate to the study of large retranslation corpora?

We hope that the seminar will bring together scholars working in fields including postcolonial studies, literary history, translation theory and, of course, the international reception of Shakespeare's work (including rewritings in English(es) as well as other languages). We invite contributions presenting historical and contemporary material, as well as theoretical reflections on the possibilities and limits of thinking about Shakespeare (re)translation, politics and ideology.

3. *Media Shakespeare: Appropriation Reconsidered*

Maurizio Calbi (University of Salerno, Italy) and Douglas M. Lanier (University of New Hampshire, US)

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This seminar will address Shakespeare *à la dérive*, those myriad adaptations, spinoffs, derivations and fragmentary allusions in contemporary media that have in some sense drifted free from anchorage in the master discourse of Shakespeare's texts. The academy has become accustomed to conceiving of these derivations in terms of *appropriation*, a process by which the accrued authority of Shakespeare's master text is seized upon and redirected to new political or cultural ends. The concept of appropriation has been extraordinarily productive, both in terms of underwriting readings of specific Shakespeare adaptations and in terms of legitimizing an emergent sub-discipline. However, the expansion of Shakespeare's presence in mass media in recent years (including the proliferation of non-Anglophone Shakespeares on film and TV, and "YouTube" and "Twitter" Shakespeares) suggests that it is timely to ask whether appropriation remains an adequate model for analyzing Shakespearean material in modern media and in a post-modern context. What are the limits of the appropriative model for understanding Shakespeare's circulation and transformation in an age of digital media and multimodal content? Does appropriation, for example, offer a binaristic and simplified understanding of the politics of mediatized Shakespeare? How far does appropriation rely on a 'humanist' notion of an un-mediated subject doing the appropriating? Is appropriation a useful model for understanding the spectatorial or participatory politics of Internet

Shakespeare? To what extent does contemporary media Shakespeare engage Shakespearean textuality at all? What other theoretical frameworks for media adaptation of Shakespeare might be equally or even more illuminating (for example, mimetics, intermediality, affective re-mediation, spectro-textuality, etc.)? How does appropriation as a model address the many transformations, recuperations and erosions of the cultural authority of Shakespeare's text in post-modern media? What tensions, affiliations, or resonances exist between "local" and global modalities of Shakespearean appropriation? What distinctive challenges or advantages does appropriation present as a model for media versions of Shakespeare within a European context? How to address the distribution, circulation, marketing and reception of mediatised Shakespeare within a specifically European context? How does media adaptation of Shakespeare accord with or differ from the media adaptation of comparable cultural figures in European culture, and how does that comparison illuminate appropriation as a conceptual model? For this seminar we invite papers that explore Shakespeare's transformations in modern media as a means to reconsider the appropriateness of appropriation as a analytic model. We welcome papers on particular adaptations in modern media, especially those which engage recent Shakespearean media materials, but we also invite more wide-ranging discussions of the cultural, political and ethical implications of appropriation as a model for Shakespearean media adaptation in Europe.

4. *'Happy wrecks'? Staging Storms and Tempests in Shakespeare's Comedies*

Boika Sokolova (University of Notre Dame (USA) in England, UK) and Nicoleta Cinpoes (University of Worcester, UK)

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“What is this world, but a sea, wherein wee nauigate and are in continuall danger; Nay, the sea is so variable, so inconstant and so outrageous? For if we haue neuer so little respite, peace and rest, (like as when the sea is calm and quiet) presently there arise such violent whirle winds, storms and furious tempests, as it seemeth oftentimes, that heauen, earth, and all the elements conspire and runne together to work our ruin... And when [it] becommeth most calme and gentle..., then it is most false unto us, and then are we in greatest danger.” Peter de la Primaudaye, 1618.

The aim of this seminar is to explore ‘storms and furious tempests’ in post-1990 stage, film and TV productions of Shakespeare’s comedies. It sets out to investigate the ways in which productions negotiate meaning within specific historical, geographical, cultural and linguistic contexts when engaging with (or cutting) Shakespeare’s scripted ‘storms’, ‘tempests’ and ‘wracks’ in comedies ranging from *The Comedy of Errors* to the late romances. We welcome contributions for papers of maximum 3,000 words that reflect on some of the following questions:

- What work do storms and tempests do in particular stage, film or TV productions?
- How have they been created with a view to the respective medium/a?
- How do the visual images relate to the other interpretive means of the productions?
- How do they meaningfully punctuate the action and its development?
- What is their visual and emotional impact on the worlds they affect – the ones destroyed, the ones created, the ones left behind and the ones discovered – and on the characters who survive them?

- How do they problematise identities – gender, genre, national, media? Have they been used for the particular illumination of any of these/or other issues?
- Do they have any particular politics? Do they comment on cultural context in which the performance belongs? How are they configured and how do they reconfigure (their own) historical and performative contexts?

5. *Sea-Change Across the Intercultural Divide: Shakespearean Performance and Debates* Alexander Huang (Pennsylvania State University, US) and Isabelle Schwartz-Gastine (University of Caen, France)

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The seminar welcomes papers on Shakespeare in performance in any period that participate in or initiate debates—theory, praxis, reception—in Europe and worldwide. During his lifetime, Shakespeare’s plays were performed in Europe and subsequently taken to remote corners of the globe, including Sierra Leone, Socotra, and colonial Indonesia. Performances in England also had a global flair. European visitors such as Thomas Platter witnessed the plays on stage at the Globe (1599) and left behind diary records. Four centuries on, there has been a sea change. In theatre, Shakespeare has been recruited, exemplified, resisted, and debated in post/colonial encounters, in the international avant-garde led by Ariane Mnouchkine, Ninagawa Yukio, Peter Brook, Tadashi Suzuki, and others, and in the circuits of global politics and tourism in late capitalist societies.

The purpose of this seminar is to take stock of the worldwide histories of performance and criticism to uncover any blind spots in current methodologies to study the theoretical and artistic implications of Shakespeare *and* the cultures of diaspora, Anglophone countries, Europe, Russia, Africa, the Arab world, Asia, Latin America and elsewhere.

Localized and globalized Shakespeares are undoubtedly prominent genres of national and intercultural theatres today. It is important to understand how this came to be, why Shakespeare has been called upon to help transform theatrical practices around the world, and what kinds of force—political, aesthetic or otherwise—are shaping the performative Shakespeare we know today. In the decades since J. L. Styan’s *The Shakespeare Revolution* (1977) which makes a case for “stage-centered criticism,” the study of Shakespeare in performance has come a long way, now established as a widely recognized field. Two challenges remain. As artists struggle with fixated notions of tradition, critics are no longer confined by the question of narrowly defined cultural authenticity. However, what are the new paradigms that can help us avoid replicating the old author-centered textuality in performance criticism? What critical resources might we bring to the task of interpreting sets of behaviors and signs in performance? What is the role of local and global spectators? More importantly, what is the task of criticism as it deals with the transformations of Shakespeare and various performance idioms?

Topics to be examined might include, but not limited to:

- The place of Shakespearean performance in critical debates about authenticity and national identities
- The role of Shakespeare in fostering productive exchanges between cultures
- The role of Shakespeare in performance theories and practices
- The tension between the spectator’s presence and performance

**6. *Marooned Texts, Shipwrecked Performances: Shakespeare and Censorship*
Veronika Schandl (Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Hungary) and Nataliya Torkut
(Zaporizhzhya State University, Ukraine)**

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Censorship has been in the focus of literary studies in the past few years. Recent projects that have been launched in England (co-ordinated by the British Academy), Spain, Portugal, as well as Central-Eastern European countries show that this is a scholarly interest that unites Europe. In our seminar we would like to take the theme of the conference: that is Shakespeare's shipwrecks to a metaphoric level, and discuss how Shakespeare's texts and performances were marooned, or got shipwrecked by the workings of censorship, both in Early Modern England and in history ever since.

The theatre can be viewed as standing on the threshold of two worlds, one shown on the stage and the other, that of contemporary reality on which the theatre has to reflect, which it sometimes criticizes and against which it sets the illusory reality of the play. As it exists in what is basically a conflict zone of reality and the world of the performance, it affects both. The theatre therefore does not only reflect the social, political and cultural discourses of a given society, but, whether actively or passively, also forms them. Therefore, centralised regimes always wished to control what discourse the theatre enters into. Elizabethan and Jacobean England were no exceptions to this rule. Thus we welcome in our seminar essays discussing how regulatory decisions in Shakespeare's England affected the stage and the plays. We would very much wish this discussion to go beyond the somewhat exhausted subversion-versus-containment dichotomy and offer a more diverse understanding of the cultural and political significance of the discussed plays and theatre performances (e.g. with regards to the question of 'positive' censorship).

Shakespeare's position in the European canon as the number one playwright has secured the interests of all authoritarian societies in the reception of Shakespeare as well. That is why the seminar would like to devote time to the Shakespeare's reception under the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century as well. The seminar welcomes papers discussing the fate of both the Shakespearean texts as well as those of the performances under the Fascist and Socialist regimes of Europe.

The seminar would encourage an interdisciplinary discussion, uniting textual and performance critics, and wishes to launch a project that would dive deep and bring the wreckage of shipwreck texts and performances to the surface.

Registration details and further information about the conference will be made available at the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft webpage (www.shakespeare-gesellschaft.de) in due course.